

The Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation,
and Substance Abuse Services

Patient Handbook



3302 Gallows Road
Falls Church, Virginia, 22042-3398
703-207-7100

PATIENTS' RIGHTS

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, the rights of patients are posted in each treatment unit, and you are given a copy of your rights on admission. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services maintains a system of patient advocacy to ensure these rights.

The Human-Rights Advocate is available to you to discuss any concerns you may have regarding your rights. The telephone number of the Human Rights Advocate is 703 654-3166.

The Local Human Rights Committee (LHRC) plays a vital role in the human-rights program of the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) is an independent agency of the state government, which was authorized during the 2002 legislative session of the General Assembly to oversee the rights of the state's disabled residents. You may contact VOPA at 1-800 552-3962.

For more information about the LHRC or VOPA, contact the Human Rights Advocate.

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HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

In accordance with the intent of the General Assembly of Virginia, the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute was established as a short-term hospital to provide intensive treatment for individuals who are living in Northern Virginia and have a mental illness.

The first 20-bed unit of the inpatient service was opened on January 15, 1968.

Currently the Institute has 127 beds, divided into four units. The Admissions Unit (F Unit) has 25 beds. The remaining beds are distributed among Units I-1 and I-2 (for both units, a total of 58 beds) and K Unit (44 beds).

The role of the Institute has evolved over the years, as the needs of the population have changed. Part of the change has been a greater coordination with community organizations. In addition to its service responsibilities, the Institute has assumed an important teaching role. It is affiliated with major universities throughout the region and provides training opportunities for mental-health professionals.

The Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute is part of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ADMISSION

PROCEDURE

All admissions are prescreened with a mental-health assessment and a physical examination in the person's area of residence. The prescreener, upon determining a need for admission, contacts the Admissions Coordinator to secure a bed and arrange a time for admission.

When the patient arrives at the hospital, a psychiatrist completes the initial psychiatric assessment. The Admissions Coordinator meets with the patient to complete paperwork and, with the patient's permission, notifies the patient's family of his or her arrival.

Community mental-health workers and the Nursing Supervisor coordinate admissions outside of normal working hours.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

- In need of acute psychiatric treatment.
- Not in need of acute medical treatment.
- Must be 18 through 64 years old.
- Resident of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, or Prince William County, or the City of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, or Manassas Park.

THE TREATMENT PROGRAM

The treatment program at the Institute is designed to facilitate the early return of the patient to the community. It provides a well structured daily-living situation in a safe, secure setting. Professional support and guidance are available to help patients cope with their problems and progress toward recovery.

Individual treatment sessions are available with trained professional staff, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Group sessions are also offered to help patients develop the skills and supports they will need in the community. Some of those include symptom and medication management, men's and women's health education, community-living skills, and anger management. Social and recreational activities, offered daily, help patients develop skills to use during leisure time. AA meetings and groups to address substance disorders are regularly available, as well as meetings with family members or significant others whom a patient may want to include in his/her treatment.

The treatment program is individualized. Each person is assisted in achieving increasing levels of activity and responsibility as recovery progresses.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Each patient receives a physical examination upon admission. Medications are prescribed by the medical staff, as indicated.

Emergency medical and surgical services are provided by consultants practicing in the community. In the event of a medical or surgical emergency during

hospitalization, transfer to a community hospital for treatment is arranged.

If Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is indicated and recommended, the patient, relatives, and the Human Rights Advocate are advised, education is provided, and permission is secured prior to such treatment.

PHYSICIAN COVERAGE

The Institute has 24-hour coverage by a licensed primary-care physician, and a nurse-practitioner is available. The attending psychiatrist provides coverage from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with daily rounds during working hours by a specialist in internal medicine. On weekends and holidays, the on-call psychiatrist conducts rounds of all patient areas. Medical consultations are conducted on the hospital premises, as well as off-site.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

Virginia law requires a discharge plan to be in place before a patient may be discharged. The initial discharge plan is part of the Comprehensive Treatment Plan and is completed within five days of the patient's admission. The staff of the Community Services Board is actively involved with the treatment team and has primary responsibility for discharge planning. They also make weekly visits to the Institute during the patient's stay.

"NGRI" (Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity) patients are actively involved in their discharge planning. However, the Court determines their actual discharge.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Each unit has a weekly patient and staff meeting. The unit elects a patient to serve as the community president, who runs the meeting and serves as liaison with staff. (Patient representatives also attend the meetings of the NVMHI Advisory Council and the Patient Welfare Committee.)

You may bring up any questions you may have concerning what is going on with you and others in your hospital setting, such as when to use washer/dryer; dealing with others; keeping your unit clean; consideration in use of phones, bathrooms.

FREE TIME

Games are available on the unit. There is a piano in the Atrium. Guitars and other instruments and radios are available, as well.

MEMBERS OF THE TREATMENT TEAM

Each patient is assigned to a treatment team, which meets regularly with the patient to plan the course of treatment and evaluate progress. Members include the patient, mental-health professionals, and students. Family members and significant others are encouraged to participate in this process.

PSYCHIATRIST

The head of each treatment team is a psychiatrist who is board-certified or eligible for board certification.

Psychiatrists are physicians who have received extended training in the treatment of mental disorders. As leader of the treatment team, the psychiatrist coordinates and implements an interdisciplinary treatment plan from admission through discharge.

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The treatment plan is based on physical and psychiatric evaluations, laboratory tests, psychological, nursing, social work, vocational/occupational, nutritional, rehabilitative, and other assessments. Treatment includes biological (medications, for example), psychological, and social-rehabilitation, and is customized to the individual's needs.

NURSING STAFF

The nursing staff includes advanced-practice psychiatric nurses, registered nurses, psychiatric practical nurses, and psychiatric technicians. Under the direction of a registered nurse, members of the nursing staff work with patients twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to help them to actively participate in their treatment and develop skills for community living. Each patient has a primary registered nurse who works in partnership with him or her to develop a plan of nursing care to meet individual needs and goals.

All members of the nursing staff support patients in achieving treatment goals within the least restrictive environment that will promote their health and recovery. Nursing-staff members work with patients individually and in groups, to help them develop an increased awareness of how their behavior impacts on themselves and on others in daily-living situations. Nursing staff also help patients develop skills to improve their ability to cope with the problems and demands they encounter in daily living.

SOCIAL WORKERS

The social worker is the liaison between the hospital, the family, and the community. Social workers conduct psychosocial assessments, participate in treatment planning, conduct individual, group, and family therapy, and coordinate discharge plans with the Community Services Board Aftercare Workers.

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PSYCHOLOGISTS

Psychologists are doctoral-level professionals who participate in diagnosis and treatment-planning. They develop and oversee behavioral interventions, and provide assessment, evaluation, treatment (group, individual, family) and consultation.

Several areas within the Psychology Department offer specialized services:

The Behavior Supports Team helps patients develop appropriate behaviors and reduce or eliminate behavioral problems.

Forensic Services provide information and support to treatment teams working with NGRI and pre-trial patients, and assist those patients in communicating with courts and attorneys, and requesting increases in privileges.

Neuropsychological Assessment Services provide specialized assessments of patients, as requested by the treatment team.

ACTIVITIES THERAPISTS

A team of registered/certified art therapists, occupational therapists, and recreation therapists provides various treatment activities for patients as part of the over-all treatment program. These activities provide opportunities for growth in such areas as personal care, fitness, living

skills, self-expression, communication, and use of leisure time.

PATIENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Your active participation in your treatment planning and program is very important to you. Everyone is encouraged to

- attend treatment planning sessions.
- actively participate in scheduled groups and activities.
- develop leisure skills during free time.
- respect the rights of others.

In order to maintain your safety and the safety of those around you, you may at times be limited to certain areas of the hospital.

As you progress, you will be able to go outside with another patient on walks, and go on weekend passes to visit friends and family or to handle any business you may have outside the hospital.

Note: You and your treatment team will discuss your progress and will work together on activities in which you can participate, to assist you in managing your needs.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

HUMAN-RIGHTS PROGRAM

The Institute has an active human-rights program to ensure that the rights of all patients are respected. It is staffed by a Human Rights Advocate, whose telephone number is printed on the inside front cover of this booklet. Information about human rights and contacting the Human Rights Advocate is posted in each patient living area.

EDUCATION

In compliance with Virginia law (PL94.142), the Institute provides a special teacher for eligible patients. The General Educational Development Test (GED) is available for eligible patients.

CROSS-CULTURAL SERVICES

Non-English-speaking patients may be provided with the services of bilingual consultants to facilitate communication. Consultants may participate in treatment, discharge planning, and family and community meetings. They may provide the treatment team with information about cross-cultural issues.

PHARMACY

A full-time registered pharmacist provides pharmacy services and serves as a consultant to the medical and nursing staffs.

OUTREACH SERVICES

Patients who require additional support in transitioning back to the community may be jointly referred, by their treatment team and the community mental-health center, for Outreach Services.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Individual and group volunteers provide friendly contact with the patients through social events and recreational activities, and assist staff with patient programming.

The Advisory Council provides community education, advocacy, and consultation, and raises funds for various purposes to benefit the patients. Computers, furnishings for the patients' library, many pictures, plants, and other decorations have been made possible through funds raised by the Advisory Council.

CLERGY

The Institute has a chaplain on site part-time, who leads weekly spiritual study and nondenominational Sunday services, and is available for individual pastoral counseling at a patient's request.

Patients may also ask other members of the clergy to visit during regular visiting hours. If this is not

possible, special arrangements may be made, through the patient's treatment team, for visitation at other times.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

What to bring: Storage space is very limited.
Please bring only what is essential and listed below.

- **DAYWEAR**
A limited amount of machine- or hand-washable casual clothing for indoor and outdoor activities.
- **NIGHTWEAR**
Pajamas or nightgowns, bathrobe or housecoat, bedroom slippers.
- **OUTERWEAR**
Warm jacket, gloves, and cap for outdoor activities during cold weather.
- **SHOES**
Rubber-soled shoes or sneakers for sports activities and casual shoes to wear indoors.
- **TOILET ARTICLES**
Deodorant, toothpaste, cosmetics or shaving accessories. Electric razors and non-glass containers are preferred. Bladed razors will be provided. Electrical grooming aids, shavers, and hair dryers must be inspected for safety and tagged by an Institute employee before use.
- **MONEY**

Small amounts of money may be kept for use in vending machines; larger amounts should be kept on deposit with the cashier. The cashier is available to

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transact business on the unit at designated times each weekday.

- **MISCELLANEOUS**

Pen, pencil, stamps, stationery, books.

What Not to Bring:

- **MEDICATION FROM HOME**
- **VALUABLES:** the Institute cannot be responsible for broken or lost articles.
- **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES** such as stereos, TVs, or recording devices.

NAME TAGS

All staff can be identified by their name tags.

PASSES

Weekend, daytime, and overnight passes are written for patients who are able to return to the community for a trial period. Family members will be involved in planning for passes and are encouraged to discuss the behavior while on pass with the patient and the staff. You are responsible for requesting passes for the day, overnight, work, or AA meetings.

Pick up medication from your assigned nurse before you depart. On return from pass, return the pass

medication bottles to your assigned nurse and discuss any problems with taking the medications.

If you are escorted on pass, your escort needs to come to the unit to sign the pass sheet upon your departure, and again upon your return to the hospital. Do not use alcohol, drugs, or any unprescribed medications. The effects of alcohol are increased by your medication, and using drugs or unprescribed medication can have serious side effects.

PARKING

Parking spaces at this hospital are limited, and therefore are reserved for staff during weekday business hours and for visitors during evening and weekend hours. Free parking for patients' vehicles is available just outside the hospital property, next to Fairfax Hospital. However, patients are discouraged from bringing vehicles unless necessary for treatment purposes or discharge planning. Bicycle parking must be arranged through hospital staff.

GRATUITIES

Employees of the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute are not permitted to accept gifts or gratuities.

SMOKING

Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is permitted only in designated outdoor areas at scheduled times. Turn in all matches and lighters to staff.

FIRE SAFETY

Please follow staff directions when fire alarm sounds.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

All alcoholic beverages are prohibited at the Institute. Alcoholic beverages found anywhere on hospital property will be confiscated and disposed of according to Virginia state laws.

UNIT LIVING

As in all communities, mutual respect is essential for the well-being of everyone. As a courtesy to other patients, please keep the TV and radio at an acceptable volume, and operate them only at designated times.

The unit TV can be used during non-programming times, according to the following schedule:

6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekdays

6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekends

YOUR ROOM

You will share your room with one or two other persons. Each room has two or three single beds, built-in closets, and drawer space. Members of the same sex share a room. Toilet and bathing facilities are shared between two rooms occupied by the same sex.

You and your roommates will be expected to keep your room in order and your beds made. Self-care is the responsibility of all patients. You should attend to your own personal needs, such as hygiene, laundry, and storing your belongings in the drawers and closets provided.

There is a common lounge and living room for each unit. Unit lights are turned off at 10:00 p.m.; room lights are off at 11:00 p.m.

MEALS

Patients eat all meals in the cafeteria, unless their treatment plan indicates otherwise. Socializing is encouraged by seating at tables of four.

DIETARY NEEDS

Counseling is available from a registered dietitian. Special diets may be ordered by the physician (e.g., low-sodium) or may be requested by the patient (e.g., vegetarian).

VENDING MACHINES

Vending machines can be found in various locations throughout the hospital. They are open to patients, families, and friends.

CASHIER

Cashier service is available during business hours, Monday through Friday. The cashier is on the Treatment Mall and the unit at designated times.

Experience has shown that only a minimum amount of money is needed by a patient. Deposits and withdrawals may be made with the cashier. Money orders, cashiers checks and most government checks may be deposited and drawn on immediately. Personal checks and those from non-governmental sources may be deposited, but they will require a fifteen-day waiting period before funds may be withdrawn.

WASHERS AND DRYERS

Free laundry facilities for personal use are available on each unit. Detergent is supplied by the Institute.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

The Washington Post, several Northern Virginia weekly newspapers, and a variety of current popular magazines are provided to each unit.

MAIL

Unopened mail is delivered to patients once a day. Mail received after a patient's discharge will be forwarded.

There is a mailbox in the front of the Institute for outgoing mail. The mailing address for the Institute is

*3302 Gallows Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042-3398*

PATIENT LIBRARY

The Patient Library, located in the Atrium, is open at all times and contains a variety of reading materials. Patients should check out and return any books or magazines belonging to the Library.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

An indoor gymnasium and recreation room are available for supervised scheduled activities.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT

NVMHI's philosophy is to encourage patients to develop skills to limit or manage themselves during behavioral emergencies. When an individual is admitted to the hospital, a nurse will ask if he or she has ever been in seclusion or restraint and what alternative measures could be used during this hospitalization. It is very important for patients and family members to share their ideas about what helps

and what does not help in a behavioral emergency.

If a patient feels he might harm himself, staff are immediately available to work with him to help him regain a sense of control. Occasionally, time in a quiet room may be helpful. These rooms are located on patient units. They are available, with the door left open, to patients who would like quiet time. Quiet time may be used:

- a) if you need to be alone,
- b) if you feel you are going to lose control, or
- c) if you feel you might hurt yourself or others.

Staff will check on you frequently.

If an individual should become physically aggressive or out of control, staff members may assist that patient to a seclusion room, with the door locked for safety. Likewise, physical or mechanical restraints may be used when those measures have been identified by the patient as helpful, or when the physician believes they are necessary for safety.

A member of the nursing staff observes the patient in the seclusion room continuously and attends to the patient's needs. Strict policies in the use of seclusion and restraint are designed to protect patients when those measures are used.

When quiet or seclusion rooms are occupied, please be considerate of the special needs of those patients for privacy and quiet. When you see staff entering the room, please do not walk past. This allows privacy for the patient and safety for others.

Nursing staff will be available to talk with you about any concerns you may have regarding the purposes or use of the seclusion rooms.

SATISFACTION SURVEY

When you are ready to leave the hospital, you will be asked to fill out a satisfaction survey. Your answers are confidential. The survey asks you some questions about your stay here at NVMHI. You will be asked:

- how the hospital has helped you,
- about patients' rights,
- about your care, and
- about the hospital.

Your answers are important to us.

WHOM TO SEE WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

PRIMARY REGISTERED NURSE

Your primary nurse is a member of your treatment team, who

- Works with you to identify your goals and ways to reach your goals.
- Helps you to develop skills, change behavior, and manage symptoms, so that you can have a better quality of life in the community.
- Assists you if you think you might harm yourself or someone else.
- Meets with you regularly to get your view of your progress and ways to help you improve.
- Helps you arrange an appointment with your doctor and reports your progress to your doctor.

PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN

- Talks with you; helps you explore ways to solve problems.
- Assists you in participating in scheduled activities.
- Helps to maintain a safe environment.
- Assists you with daily-living activities, as needed.

PSYCHIATRIST

Meets with you at morning rounds and treatment planning on a regular basis to discuss your progress, treatment, and medications, and to answer questions you may have concerning your illness.

SOCIAL WORKER

- Keeps in touch with your family; may schedule family meetings.
- Leads groups and may be available for individual sessions.
- Discusses your discharge plan with you and helps arrange housing and community appointments, in collaboration with the Community Services Board Aftercare Workers.

ACTIVITIES THERAPIST

- Helps you to develop new living and coping skills.
- Helps you to get organized.

PSYCHOLOGIST

- May be asked by treatment team to design a plan to help you with managing behaviors.
- Is available for group therapy, and may be available for individual and family sessions.

HUMAN-RIGHTS ADVOCATE

- Answers your questions concerning your rights or the rights of others.
- Helps resolve problems relating to your rights.

CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

Provides advocacy and support for current and former patients. **The Northern Virginia Mental Health Consumers' Association** meets on the first Sunday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, 2001 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306. Transportation from the Metro can be arranged by calling 703-360-3657. For information, call 703-566-1699, ext. 30.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

INQUIRIES ABOUT PATIENTS

All information about patients is confidential.

Note: Consent of the patient is legally required for the treatment team to share information with family members.

FAMILY SUPPORT AT THE INSTITUTE

The treatment team will maintain regular contact with family members by telephone. Family conferences will be scheduled as needed. Family support, encouragement, and understanding are vital to the patient's progress.

FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

A national advocacy organization, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), was formed by families of the mentally ill in an attempt to learn about mental illnesses, the systems of care, and to learn to cope with mentally ill family members. Contact the local affiliate for support and for more information:

NAMI - Northern Virginia
c/o National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
703 525-0686

VISITING

The visits of family and friends are important and contribute to a patient's well-being. There is no minimum age, but children only of the immediate family are encouraged to visit. A Visitor's Pass is issued to each visitor. It must be worn while in the building. The Visitors' Entrance is to the right and to the back of the main building. See the map on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Visiting Hours:

Monday through Friday evenings 6:15 - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, holidays 3:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Any visits during non-visiting hours must be pre-arranged with hospital staff.

TELEPHONES

Public, coin-operated and free telephones are available on each unit. Personal calls may be made and received. Patients are responsible for answering these telephones. Family and friends are asked to call between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. in order not to disturb patients' sleep.

Telecommunications Services for the Deaf
(TTY/TDD): dial 711.

PARKING

Free parking for visitors is available in the designated parking lot during evening or weekend visiting hours. Cars, vans, pickup trucks, motorcycles, and mopeds may be parked in this lot.

An NVMHI parking permit or pass is required during weekday hours. Passes are available from the receptionist at the Visitors' Entrance.

Not allowed: parking of trucks or commercial vehicles, or overnight parking by visitors.

Handicapped parking spaces are shown on the map in this booklet. State handicapped decals or license plates are required for those spaces.

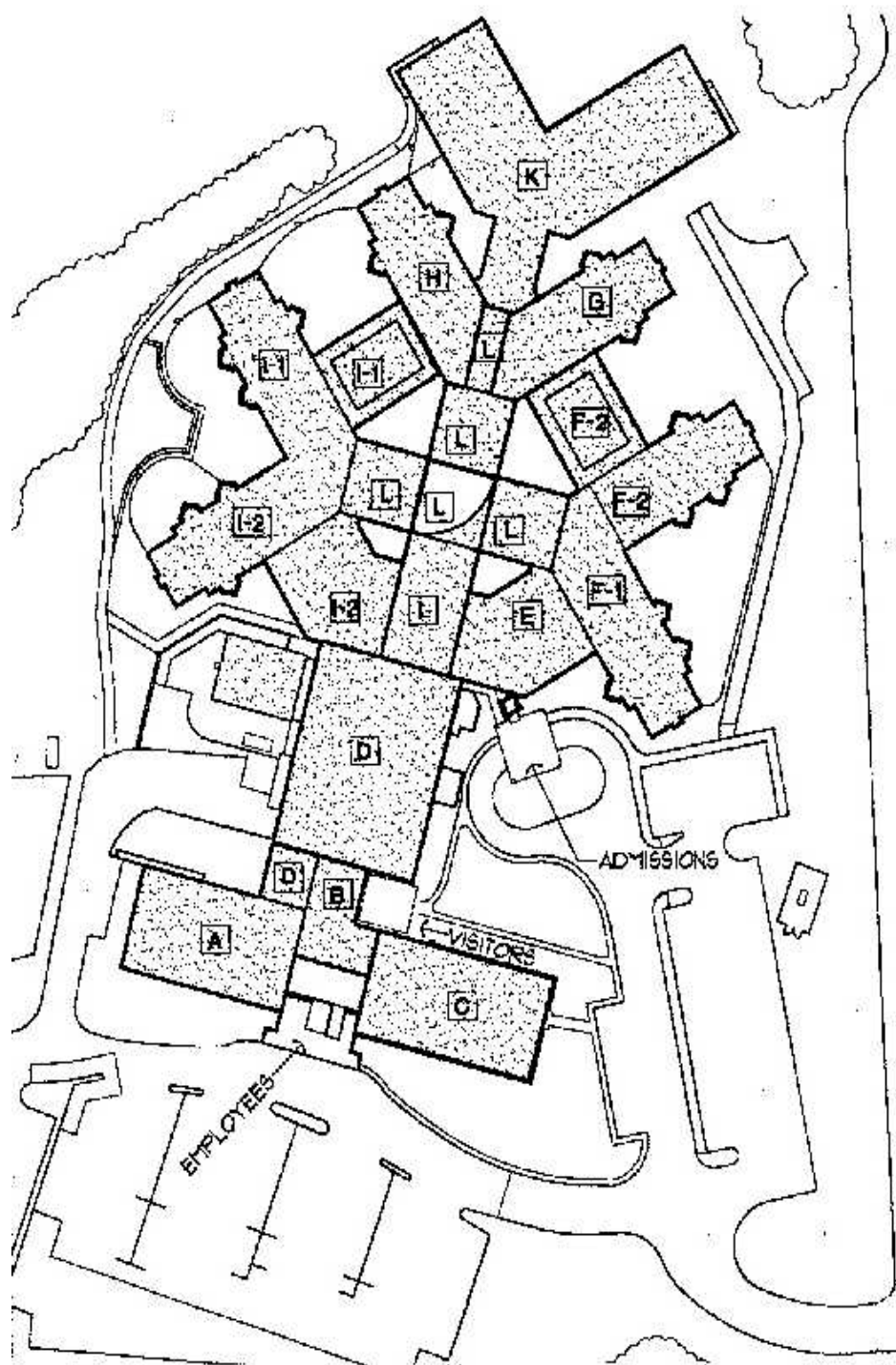
INSTITUTE CHARGES

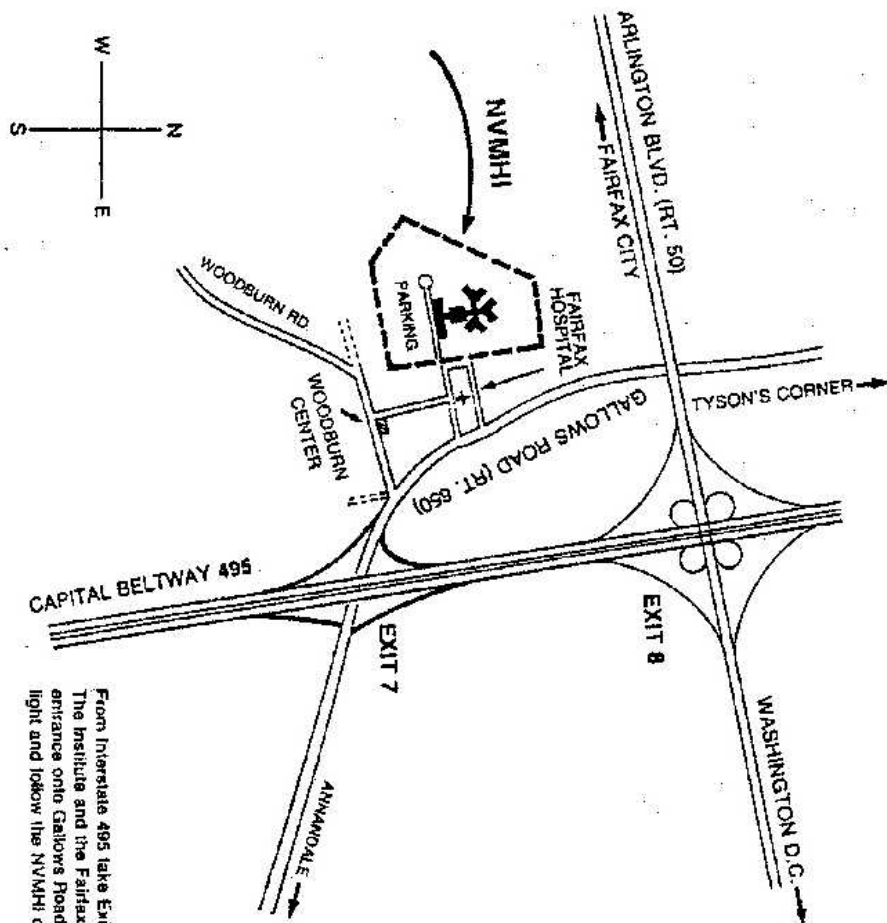
A daily rate for inpatient care is established by the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Board. Rate information is available from the Reimbursement Office.

If the patient is covered by private health insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid, the Institute will bill for benefits due. The patient or an immediate family member should provide insurance information to the Reimbursement Office as soon as possible after admission.

If, after receiving insurance payment, or if there is no insurance, financial hardship is created by payment of balances due, the Reimbursement Office may, after investigation, reduce the balance due, based on the ability to pay. No person is denied treatment because of inability to pay.

All inquiries concerning hospital charges should be made to the Reimbursement Office at 703 207-7137. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.





From Interstate 495 take Exit 7 to Gallow's Road. The Institute and the Fairfax Hospital share an entrance onto Gallow's Road. Turn at the traffic light and follow the NVMMH directional signs.